

REGION 2 BI-WEEKLY

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NAPOLITANO, FUGATE, OTHERS VISIT REGION II

As most New Yorkers know, people show up around the holidays...

Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano and FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate met with Region II staffers at Federal Plaza Thursday. Secretary Napolitano outlined the major mission areas of DHS, and her strategic vision for the department. Administrator Fugate detailed FEMA's recent reorganization.



Secretary Napolitano reminded staffers of the size of DSH, which is now the third largest agency in the federal government with over 230,000 employees, serving five major mission areas: 1) counterterrorism—"Our number one priority"; 2) securing the air, land, and sea borders of the United States; 3) enforcing immigration laws and focusing more on workplace enforcement and companies that hire illegal aliens; 4) preparing, responding, and recovering from disasters, and; 5) and creating one department out of the many varied agencies that now make up DHS. "Out of unity, comes strength," she said.

Secretary Napolitano also stressed the need to share information and nurture partnerships across all 10 regions, calling for better uses of technology, more careful and efficient use of the department's financial resources, and a closer look at how all DHS component agencies spend taxpayer money in an era of tightened budgets.

To that end, Secretary Napolitano announced that President Obama has asked her to co-chair a task force with Housing and Urban Development to create a long-term recovery framework, similar to the National Response Framework initiative which was released in 2008. After all "Why should FEMA be in the housing business four years after a disaster?" the Secretary asked. The deadline for the new framework is April, 2010.

Napolitano ended her brief remarks with a warm endorsement of FEMA staffers nationwide. "I've been extraordinarily pleased with the men and women I've met in the course of my travels. You do excellent and important work. My thanks for what you have been doing and what you will be doing in the years to come." Secretary Napolitano's visit marks the first visit to Region II by a DHS Secretary. "

Administrator Fugate walked staffers through the agency's latest reorganization initiative, which was prompted by an effort to reduce the number of direct reports to his office. "In the existing organizational chart, I had 21 'boxes'—and 10 regional administrators—reporting directly to me. That's too many," Fugate said, as everyone familiar with the Incident Command Structure (ICS) knows.

Another impetus for reorganization is to "align FEMA's form with its functions," and bring together programs with similar missions, Fugate said. "Right now, we don't look like what we do."

As an example, Fugate said that Disaster Operations has been renamed Response, and Disaster Assistance has been renamed Recovery. In addition, the National Preparedness Directorate has been renamed National Preparedness and Protection and Grant Programs. Operations functions were consolidated under an Associate Administrator for Operations; business and mission support functions were consolidated under an Associate Administrator for Mission Support, and the Office of Federal Coordinating Officer Operations has been moved under Operations. Administrator Fugate also stressed the need to develop talent from within the agency. "The last three individuals I interviewed for Federal Coordinating Officers were from outside the agency. What can't we grow FCOs

from within our ranks?” he asked. “We’ve got to do a better job of mentoring people coming up. We have to look within FEMA for the future generation of leaders.”

He also wants headquarters staff and regional staffers to have more experience with each other’s day-to-day operations. “I want to move headquarters people into the field from time to time and regional staff into headquarters. People from HQ won’t get what’s done in the regions until they’ve done it, and the same goes for regional staff regarding what goes on at headquarters. The only way we’ll understand our respective jobs is to go out and actually do it.”

Finally, Fugate noted that the agency needs to communicate more intensively with the individuals and local organizations. “We tend to plan for what’s easy for us to do the mission rather than focusing first on what the communities actually need.”

Fugate Meets with Hispanic Leadership

As if to demonstrate his commitment to listening, Fugate met with a coalition of Hispanic community leaders, city officials, healthcare experts and media representatives to explore issues affecting disaster response and the Latin community.

Fugate talked with representatives from the Hispanic Federation, the NYC Health and Hospitals Corporation, Univision Communications Inc., El Diario la Prensa, the NYC Department of Youth and Community Development, the National Institute of Latino Policy, and the Hispanic Information Technology Network. Also on hand was the New York Secretary of State, Lorraine Cortes-Vazquez.



Fugate was candid in describing the agency’s need to improve language skills and outreach to the Latino community. “We are a state-centric, Anglo-English organization,” he said. “We need you to come to us with your concerns and recommendations.”

Univision Communication’s local affiliate Director Ramon Pineda noted that there are over four million Hispanics in the New York City area and Univision was eager to help improve communication. “Providing information in the Spanish language is crucial. We can help with language issues but we also need a Spanish-speaking contact so our media outlets know that there’s a FEMA spokesperson we can go to consistently for information. We can provide clear direction to the many Hispanic grass-roots organizations in the city, but we need a regular contact person,” Pineda said. Univision is the leading Spanish-language media company in the US.

Fugate also welcomed feedback on the Spanish language educational video “**FEMA for Kids**,” and media representatives expressed interest in using the video on air for getting out the preparedness message. “Don’t be bashful. Let us know what works and doesn’t work. We can’t improve unless you let us know what needs to be improved,” Fugate told the delegation.

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Jason Armani Santos, with Lyzette Ruiz, was among the Region’s first holiday visitors, showing up the day after Thanksgiving. Jason Armani, 23 month old, is the son of Annia Santos. Although Jason Armani did not address “all hands” as did the Region’s other guests, he was a handful. See above.

Cycle Completed

In the pre-dawn, a small boat pulls along side the Indian Point nuclear power plant site on the east side of the Hudson. A group of men get out. Soon three explosion are heard, then fires and billowing smoke are seen. A manager inside the plant calls on his cell phone. He says the men have guns, and are shooting people. He saw people hit. He doesn't know if they're dead. He's hiding, and he hopes the rest of the employees are hiding too...



That's the scenario that was presented to the risk county emergency management organizations, including Westchester, Rockland, Putnam and Orange during its Hostile Action Based (HAB) drill last month. Such drills will become mandatory every six years beginning in 2011.

With the Indian Point exercise, Region II has now completed the HAB Drill pilot program, having overseen drills at each of the five commercial sites in the Region. And they may have saved the best for last.

Westchester County Executive Andrew Spano and OEM Commissioner Tony Sutton took less than half an hour to set up a virtual JIC, connecting with NY SEMO and the county OEMs of Putnam, Orange and Rockland, all of which fall within the plant's 10-mile emergency planning zone. They soon realized that with the technical experts held hostage in the plant, they lacked vital information on which to base their decisions. Beyond that, it soon became clear that their well-rehearsed, standard public notification procedures did not suit this specific, horrific situation.

On the basis of the questions that it raised, Indian Point's HAB drill was an unqualified success. It allowed emergency managers to think the unthinkable, and to identify a number of issues that need to be addressed in the radiological emergency response plans for a hostile attack at Indian Point. Although Entergy's Indian Point will not be graded on this exercise, REP Branch Chief Rebecca Thomson says she was impressed with the counties' performance and circumstance-specific flexibility.

FACES OF THE REGION



Mark Feeley joined FEMA in November as a Program Analyst, Office of Regional Administrator in External Affairs. Mark has a consulting and project management background in city retirement systems, city government, financial services, media & entertainment, and pharmaceutical industries.

Mark worked for IBM, where he held a faculty post at IBM's Executive Business Institute, serving Fortune 500 and government agencies. He was responsible for the research, design and delivery of executive education, change management and leadership engagements. Prior to that, he was a Managing Consultant within IBM's Business Innovation Services providing business and technology consulting.

While at IBM, Mark was a consultant working with NY City OEM, helping to assess selected government agency contingency plans. He is a certified Project Management Professional, and successfully completed professional education in the areas of strategy and change, innovation, facilitation, leadership, and business contingency assessment & planning. He studied negotiation and conflict resolution through the Harvard Law School Negotiation Project, and Lead User Innovation theory at MIT.

Mark holds a BS from Binghamton University's School of Management, an MBA from Pace University (Beta Gamma Sigma Scholar), and a Master of Science from New York University (graduated with distinction).

A resident of Westchester County, Mark is married with a two small children. He participates in various nonprofit fund-raising events, and his other pursuits include serving on the Board of Directors for Search For Change, a nonprofit organization.

PASSING THE BATON

By Pat Lipp

Editor's note: Region II's Pat Lipp was among the veteran HR Specialists asked to contribute to the curriculum of EMI's basic HR course, E325, which will become a prerequisite for all HR DAEs under the new credentialing program. Here is her account of its rollout.



Throughout the summer, my co-instructors Donna Moore, a PFT from Region VI, and Fran Burris, a Region III DAE and I had worked with Tamara Alexander, the Training Officer for the HR Cadre in Emmitsburg by email and conference calls to develop E325.

The format we chose was that of a "virtual disaster," so students would get an overview of the full range of HR activities needed at every stage of on a disaster. Usually HR Specialists are deployed during the surge stage prior to a declaration. In order to respond to a request by the State for a Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA), HR needs to be in the Regional Offices, deploying reservists to staff those tours. The course contained sections on requesting staff using the ADD database.

Once the disaster declaration is signed, full scale mobilization for the Joint Field Office

begins, with HR filing requests from multiple cadre managers for more available DAEs, as well as setting up the payroll system. Equally important, HR welcomes incoming staff with task books for their specific job titles.

The class covered posting jobs, meeting, screening and interviewing qualified applicants for local hire positions. We gave the students "resumes" we had prepared. They read and sorted them, guided by the available jobs. Some groups then interviewed students and "hired" staff. Others learned how to tell applicants their skills and the available jobs were not closely matched.

FEMA HQ supported the course every step of the way. They sent Cathy Poe, the Personnel Management Specialist for DWSP from Human Capital Division in Winchester, VA to discuss DHS/FEMA Policy and Procedures, as well as an Equal Rights Officer and an Alternative Dispute Resolution Officer from HQ. The students were presented with different scenarios, and learned policy and guidance guidelines to be used at a JFO. Mt Weather sent two ADD instructors, and Patty LaBrosse, a Training Specialist from EMI, went through the new Task Books for the HR Cadre. By graduation, the class had become good friends and qualified mentors for the HR Cadre.

Questions on credentialing?

Contact HQ: FEMA-DRWD-Credentialing@dhs.gov OR
call toll free: 1-877-789-3362

